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Governor



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 6, 2017

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Governor Baker, Local Officials Celebrate Opening of Dorchester's Finnegan Park
15 Acre Former Industrial Site Converted to Open Recreational Space for Massachusetts Families

BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker today announced the opening of Senator Joseph Finnegan Park at Port Norfolk on the banks of the Neponset River, which will provide the families and residents of Dorchester with a 15-acre recreational site built upon the remains of a longtime industrial property. The governor was joined by Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Leo Roy and elected city and state officials, who were on hand to celebrate the hard work by neighborhood advocates over the past 30 years to re-purpose state property into a close-to-home state park.

"We are proud to have converted this waterfront property along the Neponset River into open space for Dorchester's residents to enjoy," **said Governor Baker**. "A fitting tribute to Senator Finnegan and his family's service, this park will honor his legacy and provide local families a recreational space in which they can grow and thrive."

"I'm grateful to the many people who worked to make the Neponset River Greenway, and now this park, a reality," **said Mayor Martin J. Walsh**. "I'd like to thank all the elected officials, neighbors and supporters who created a Neponset River waterfront that everyone can take pride in and enjoy."

In 2014, the DCR identified \$4.25 million in capital funding to acquire, clean and rehabilitate the location that would eventually become Finnegan Park. Located in lower Neponset and adjacent to Pope John Paul II Park, the site formerly housed two lumber companies that loaded wooded

products onto the Old Colony Railroad for distribution and for construction of many structures around Dorchester. As a result of prior land uses, the space became contaminated by uncontrolled releases of hazardous wastes. The neighborhood, consisting of well-organized and concerned citizens, eliminated its industrial usage following a takeover by the state in 1986. After remediation and debris removal, the site sat fallow for decades until recently.

“The opening of Senator Joseph Finnegan Park at North Point is the result of the commitment of many to ensure access to open space in an urban setting,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “By providing the residents of Dorchester with a newly refurbished park, we are continuing our commitment to environmental protection while honoring the legacy of Senator Finnegan.”

“The Department of Conservation and Recreation is pleased to add this urban parkland to our collection of nearly half a million acres of protected spaces across the Commonwealth,” **said DCR Commissioner Leo Roy**. “Natural settings like Finnegan Park are important to the health and vitality of urban families and residents, and we look forward to bringing this park the attention, and attendance, that befit its name.”

“Senator Joseph Finnegan Park is a new beginning for the Port Norfolk community of Dorchester that came to fruition after the hard work and tireless activism by the Port Norfolk Neighborhood Association and dedicated residents in the area,” **said Senator Linda Dorcea Forry (D-Dorchester)**. “I was proud to work with my colleagues Representative Dan Hunt and City Councilor Frank Baker, as well as Patrick and Baker Administrations to ensure that this community’s vision became a reality. This collaborative effort transformed a formerly polluted eye sore into the jewel of our neighborhood that families can enjoy for generations to come.”

“The entire Dorchester Community is so proud of this new vista of the mouth of the Neponset River,” **said State Representative Dan Hunt (D-Boston)**. “This new \$4 million dollar project has been years in the making and we appreciate the work of the administration. We will continue to work with the neighborhood and other stakeholders for progress on what is truly one of the jewels of the city.”

“The opening of Senator Joseph Finnegan Park is a welcome addition to the Port Norfolk neighborhood and the surrounding communities, and is a tremendous step forward in the completion of the Neponset River Greenway,” **said Boston City Councilor Frank Baker**.

With connections to surrounding parkland, Finnegan Park will be a key continuation of the reservation’s Neponset River Trail for cyclists and walkers, and features expansive green spaces with trees and rolling hills. Its name was established by legislation in 1987 to honor the memory of State Senator Joseph Finnegan, who represented Dorchester during the Great Depression.

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